REMARKS

Notwithstanding Applicants' traversal of the rejection of Claims 1-3, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the term "basic" has been deleted as unnecessary, not because it renders the claims indefinite.

Inasmuch as claims are read in light of the specification through the eyes of one of ordinary skill, there cannot be any reasonable concern that "basic" is unascertainable. The basic container is designated by numeral 1 in Figs. 1a) to 1d), for example. Nevertheless, the issue should now be moot.

The rejections of Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 20 as being anticipated by DE '266 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) (paragraph 5.1 of the Office Action) should now be moot in view of the inclusion of Claims 5 into Claim 1 upon which all other claims are directly or indirectly dependent.

Likewise, the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 4 and 7 as being anticipated by Stout under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) (paragraph 5.9 of the Office Action) should likewise be moot as should the Section 103(a) rejections of Claims 9, 14 and 17 as being unpatentable over DE '266 in view of Molina and of Claims 10 and 18 as being unpatentable over DE '266 in view of Molina and Stout.

In light of the comments made in paragraphs 21 and 22 on pages 8 and 9 of the Office Action, however, Applicants summarize some of the following salient distinctions between their claimed invention and the prior art. In this connection, Applicants propose to define the expansion element(s) as to more clearly emphasize the significant difference from the Stout trailer construction.

One of the main advantages of an expansion element of the type claimed in the present application in that the interior of the container can be easily and quickly sealed against undesirable environmental agents, e.g. biological or radioactive contamination. Increased stiffness of the overall structure is yet another advantage. This is of particular importance when the container contains heavy equipment, such as when a mobile hospital operating rooms.

The Stout expansion element is foldable, i.e. in its folded state roof section 27, outer wall section 28, floor section 26 and end walls 25 are all disposed parallel to each other, together forming a side wall of the central body portion of the container. Hence, the disadvantages with respect to low stiffness and complex sealing apply to this known arrangement. In particular, if the interior of the Stout unfolded expansion element is to be sealed, seals along all the edges of each of the roof section 27, floor section 26, outer wall sections 28 and end walls 25 are required.

As regards yet another feature of the present invention, i.e. cable winches and associated rollers, Fig. 7 in Stout reveals a far different mechanism for adjusting the foldable walls to a predetermined position. One end of the cable 105 is anchored at the lifting arm 100 which is used to lift the floor section 26. The other end of the cable 105 is anchored at an arm 108 which has an outer end secured to the roof section 27. The lifting cable 105 passes around rollers 106, 107 both rigidly mounted at the central body portion of the container. Stout does not teach the use of any rollers cooperating with a winch cable that are arranged

cooperating with a winch cable guided in a track at the foldable side wall. The rollers 111 of Stout (Fig. 7) that move up or down the trackway 110 at the roof section 27 when the expansion element unfolds or folds do not cooperate with the lifting cable 105. The movement of the roof section 27 automatically lifts or lowers the floor section 26. Independent movement of the roof section 27 with respect to other sections of the expansion element is not possible. In the present invention, however, operation of the cable winch alone, independent of any movement of the roof, will prompt the lifting or lowering of the expansion element.

The Stout cable winch for lifting the floor section of the expansion element is this far different from that of the present invention. The Stout cable winch can only be used in connection with foldable expansion elements. Its function depends on the movement of the lifting or lowering of the roof section 27, such movement automatically forcing the other sections to fold as well. It would be unusable with an expansion element of the type claimed in the present application because DE '266 uses a rigid expansion element. And this means that the hypothetical combination of Stout with DE '266 can only be based upon impermissible hindsight.

The folding-open side wall 5 plays no part at all in lowering or lifting the expansion element. Therefore, the assertion "expansion element, folded-open side wall and lifting device of the container all interact with each other when the expansion element is moved and lowered from the container" is clearly incorrect.

Instead, lifting and lowering in DE '266 is effected by additional guide rails 50 arranged below an expansion element. For lifting and lowering, a guide rail may comprise starting steps 55 or a lifting rail in which guide rails are divided into two parallel stacked partial rails, where the one can be lifted and lowered with respect to the other partial rail by a hydraulic cylinder. The use of a winch would be totally incongruous for the rail configuration in the DE '266 container.

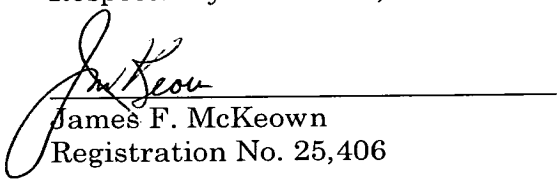
Accordingly, entry of the proposed amendments and allowance of all claims is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this response or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket # 101280.53096US).

Respectfully submitted,

March 13, 2007



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